

## Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

UNCLAS BERLIN 958

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, WB

SUBJECT: RIAS CEREMONY: CHANGE OF GENERAL MANAGER

SUMMARY: BERLIN'S GOVERNING MAYOR AND OTHERS PAY TRIBUTE  
TO RIAS ON OCCASION OF RIAS GENERAL MANAGER CHANGE-OVER.  
(END SUMMARY.)

IMPORTANCE OF RIAS IN LIFE OF BERLIN WAS EMPHASIZED  
BY A SERIES OF SPEAKERS IN CEREMONY JUNE 6 MARKING  
RETIREMENT OF ROLAND MUELLERBURG AS RIAS INTENDANT AND  
HIS SUCCESSION BY LUDWIG FREIHERR VON HAMMERSTEIN.

SPEAKERS INCLUDED AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND; GOVERNING MAYOR  
SCHUETZ, PROFESSOR DR. HANS BAUSCH, INTENDANT OF SOUTH GERMAN  
RADIO (STUTTGART) AND CHAIRMAN OF THE ARD (ASSOCIATION OF WEST  
GERMAN BROADCASTERS); FRANZ BARSIG, INTENDANT OF SENDER FREIES  
BERLIN; AND GERARD M. GERT, AMERICAN DIRECTOR OF RIAS.

GUESTS INCLUDED STATE SECRETARY KARL HEROLD OF FRG MINISTRY  
OF INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS AND OTHER BONN OFFICIALS, FORMER  
COLLEAGUES OF HAMMERSTEIN'S AT NORTH GERMAN RADIO (HAMBURG),  
AS WELL AS NUMEROUS POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND MEDIA PERSONALITIES  
OF BERLIN.

AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND SAID, IN PART: "FOR MORE THAN 27 YEARS  
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RIAS HAS BEEN A POTENT FORCE IN BERLIN'S CULTURAL LIFE, IT IS RECOG-

NIZED AS A GENUINE BERLIN LANDMARK, AND--IN MY OPINION--IT IS ONE OF THE FINEST EXAMPLES OF GERMAN-AMERICAN COOPERATION ANYWHERE. SPEAKING AT LEAST FOR THE AMERICAN SIDE OF THE COOPERATIVE EFFORT, I CAN SAY WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THE EXCELLENT REPUTATION WHICH RIAS HAS BUILT UP AND MAINTAINED OVER THESE MANY YEARS."

IN BEHALF OF USIA DIRECTOR KEOGH, THE AMBASSADOR PRESENTED TO MUELLERBURG A SPECIAL SUPERIOR COMMENDATION IN RECOGNITION OF HIS SERVICE TO RIAS AND TO CAUSE OF GERMAN-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP.

REFERRING TO RIAS AS "A CHILD OF THE AMERICANS," THE GOVERNING MAYOR SAID HE BELIEVED "THE CHILD HAS GROWN UP AND NO LONGER HAS A FATHER FIXATION--AND A GOOD FATHER IS RATHER HAPPY WHEN THAT IS THE CASE." HE CONTINUED: "AND IT IS SURELY THE BEST COMPLIMENT BERLINERS CAN PAY TO RIAS AND ITS AMERICAN FORBERAS WHEN THIS LIVELY STATION IS REGARDED AS AN AUTHENTIC BERLIN INSTITUTION. RIAS--RADIO IN THE AMERICAN SECTOR--HAS BECOME RADIO IN ALL SECTORS: I EMPHASIZE 'ALL' SECTORS. SIMILARLY IT IS A LANDMARK FOR THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES AND BERLIN WERE FRIENDS IN THE YEARS OF CRISIS AND THAT THEY REMAIN FRIENDS WHO CAN DEPEND ON EACH OTHER."

BARSIG OBSERVED THAT FROM TIME TO TIME VOICES ARE HEARD ASKING WHETHER TIME HAS COME FOR RIAS TO CLOSE DOWN. "WHENEVER SUCH THINGS HAVE BEEN SAID, I HAVE SPOKEN UP PERSONALLY TO URGE THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF RIAS," BARSIG ADDED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT SFB CAME INTO BEING IN 1954, WHEREAS RIAS HAS "BELONGED TO THIS CITY" SINCE 1946. "I SEE IT NOT ONLY AS A RADIO STATION BUT AS AN INDISPENSABLE PART OF THE PROTECTIVE POWERS' PRESENCE," HE CONTINUED. "QUESTIONS OF LEGAL STATUS AND FINANCING ARE OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE. I BELIEVE WEST BERLINERS WOULD SUFFER A GREAT LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IF RIAS WERE IN ANY WAY DIMINISHED OR INTERFERED WITH."

CEREMONY WAS COVERED PROMINENTLY BY BERLIN PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION.KLEIN

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